



Human rights and environmental abuses by the Belgian company SIAT: an African delegation shares its experiences and mobilises in Brussels

Press release, 13 June 2022

A delegation of African communities that accuse the Belgian company SIAT of appropriating their land will be in Brussels from 12 to 22 June. The programme of their visit includes a mobilisation in front of the company's headquarters, political meetings around the legislative debates on the duty of care for companies and meetings with the press. On this occasion, a collective of African and European organisations is publishing a new policy brief highlighting evidence of land grabbing by SIAT in Africa.

Five community representatives from Ghana, Nigeria and Ivory Coast will be in Brussels to denounce the human rights abuses they have been subjected to for years. They all denounce the appropriation of their lands by a Belgian company specialised in the production of rubber and palm oil, SIAT (Société d'investissement pour l'agriculture tropicale).

SIAT is one of the five main companies that control 75% of oil palm plantations in Africa. It sells its palm oil products to large multinational corporations such as Unilever and Nestlé, and its rubber products feed into the supply chains of the international giants of the tyre industry, such as Michelin and Goodyear.

The expansion of SIAT's plantations occurred without ensuring the rights of local communities. Although the contexts are different in each country, the claims of the Ghanaian, Ivorian and Nigerian communities are similar to each other in terms of the company's impact: land grabbing - threatening the food sovereignty of local communities, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, workers' rights violations, environmental degradation, and strong repression of local communities' opposition to the company's activities.

Representatives from the local communities are bringing their claims to Brussels to shed light on SIAT's responsibility. They are also coming to denounce a predatory agro-commodities model inspired by a neo-colonialist logic, and they are calling for the adoption of strong binding rules for companies at the Belgian, European and international level.

AGENDA OF THE VISIT AND MEETING OPPORTUNITIES

- **Press conference:** Tuesday 14 June, 10:00-12:00, 32 Rue du Gouvernement provisoire, 1000 Brussels.
- **Conference for the general public:** Monday 20 June, 18:30 - 21:30, [How to resist land grabbing in West Africa?](#), Quai 22, 22 Rue du Séminaire, 5000 Namur, Belgium.
- **Action in front of SIAT's headquarters:** Wednesday 22 June, 10:00 - 12:00 in Zaventem (invitation specific for the press forthcoming).
- Further meeting opportunities on request.

COMPOSITION OF THE DELEGATION

- **Gladys Omorefe Osaghae** (Nigeria): farmer, community leader and secretary of a women's group from the Obaretin community. Member of the Integrated Rice Farmers Association of Nigeria (IRFAN).
- **Sinan Ouattara Issifou** (Ivory Coast): representative of the local communities of Famienkro, spokesperson for the King of the Andoh and president of the Alliance for Sustainable Development and the Environment (ADDE).
- **Daleba Nahounou Pierre Lautti** (Ivory Coast): head of "Social Justice" and programmes within the association Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement (JVE) - Côte d'Ivoire
- **Rita Uwaka** (Nigeria): Forest & Biodiversity programme coordinator at Friends of the Earth Africa
- **Wisdom Koffi Adjawlo** (Ghana): executive director of the association Youth Volunteers for the Environment - Ghana

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **New policy brief:** ["Large-scale land acquisitions in Africa: Impacts, conflicts and human rights violations. The case of SIAT's subsidiary in Ivory Coast"](#)
- **Video:** [Testimonies from communities affected by SIAT activities in Ghana](#)
- **Video:** ["MADE IN IMPUNITY: Belgian rubber from Ivory Coast"](#)
- **Fact sheets:** [Ghana](#) and [Ivory Coast](#) cases presented by the People's Tribunal on cases of abuse by agribusiness companies in Africa
- **Article by GRAIN:** ["Communities in Africa fight back against land grabbing for palm oil"](#).

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African press

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